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Ravalli County Commissioners

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**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

October 22, 2008

Dear County Commissioners,

I invite you to attend an informational meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Great Northern Hotel in Helena.

As you know, FWP completed a Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy in 2005. The Strategy identifies an array of conservation opportunities and challenges ahead for Montana's fish, wildlife and recreational resources. Issues pertaining to land use decisions, transportation efficiencies, responsible energy development and climate change are generally discussed in the Strategy document.

Montana's Strategy also highlights geographical areas, fish and wildlife communities, and specific species of special conservation importance. The Strategy emphasizes the need for cooperation among Montana's landowners and others, to help prevent Montana's flora and fauna from being listed under expensive federal Endangered Species Act provisions.

FWP is now reaching out to find partners willing to embark on a new and important project to provide more consistent and useful information about Montana's fish and wildlife. Through related efforts, FWP and several partners, including the Montana Association of Counties (MACo), recently participated successfully in a Western Governors Association policy planning process to recommend actions aimed at conserving crucial areas and corridors throughout the West.

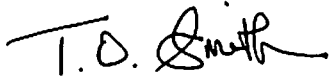
One critical need repeatedly identified at the multi-state, state, and local level is the development of GIS map layers of Montana's fish and wildlife crucial areas and corridors. Such layers would be useful tools to support many community-based conservation and restoration efforts, including federal and state resource management planning, local land use planning, and business and industry planning.

Over the coming months, FWP will conduct a series of meetings to exchange information and ideas, as these new science-based GIS tools become available. We intend to seek your help in determining the most realistic and effective actions needed to conserve Montana's fish, wildlife and recreational resources.

I hope you can join FWP and other partners on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Please RSVP to me at [tosmith@mt.gov](mailto:tosmith@mt.gov) with the number and names of the individuals who will attend. If you have

special requirements due to disability or dietary concerns, please advise so that we can make appropriate accommodations. Lunch will be provided, and the agenda will include an explanation of the process, timeline, and expected products, as well as an opportunity for you to become engaged in this conservation endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T.O. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

T.O. Smith  
Special Projects, Planning and Policy Coordinator

cc: MACo Executive Director Harold Blattie